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# LETTER FRIEND CHANGING RELIGION.

IMPRIMATUR

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Preface. **S**hewing the reasonableness of any Man's changing his Religion upon proper Motives, and of what nature they are, and wherein the scandal of such a change is truly given. An enquiry is then made into the reasons of this Gentleman's Proceedings, and those are observed to be chiefly two, viz. That he might become more truly in the Communion of the Catholick Church, and that he might be more Pure and Orthodox in his Faith and Worship.

§ 1. The first of these Proposals is examined, and the Church of Rome is shewn not to be the Catholick Church upon account either of its Authority or Comprehension. The first is proved in that the Catholick Church was not established by our Saviour under a Monarchical, but an Aristocratical Government; and this is shewn farther from the election and practice of the twelve Apostles. That the Church of Rome is but a particular Church is also shewn from Scripture. An Objection relating to St. Peter is answered. The practice of the Apostles and the Bishops their Successors shews that their Government was in Society. Several reasons are urged farther, to prove that the Church of Rome cannot be the Catholick Church; and that the Church of England as a particular Church hath equal right and as good a claim as she to all those Promises which are made unto the Church by our Blessed Saviour in the Gospel.

§ 2. This is further shewn to have been the opinion even of the Church of Rome in former Ages, and proved from her Decrees and Practice in the Sacrament of Baptism. A Comparison is also made between the Church of Rome, and that of the Donatists on this pretence, and St. Augustine's Argument against the one, applied in terminis unto the other.

§ 3. A Comparison is also made between the Church of Rome and Church of England as to terms of Communion, and thereby it is shewn that (according to his notion of Catholick) he that lives in the Communion of the Church of England, lives more in the Communion of the Catholick Church, than any Member of the Church of Rome.

§ 4. A further Comparison is made between the Churches as to the Universality of their Doctrine, and thereby it is shewn that the Catholick Faith is much more truly profest in the Church of England than in the Church of Rome.

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§ 5. It is also shewn that in point of Doctrin the Church of England is more ancient than the Church of Rome, so that the old Religion appears evidently to be still profess'd there, and that no new Doctrin was brought in, but rather abolished by the Reformation.

§ 6. The second Motive is enquired into and examined, and a brief Comparison in this point is made between the Churches; shewing how the one is founded on the Scriptures, and is consonant to the Law of God, and the Principles of Reason, while the other hath no ground but a loose Tradition, and Contradicts them, both in her Doctrin, and Religious Practice.

§ 7. The Question is more particularly stated in that Doctrin and Practice that relates unto the Sacraments. With a brief Observation of the unreasonableness of the one, and the danger of the other, as they now stand in the Church of Rome.

§ 8. The Doctrin of the Church of Rome in this Point is laid down, and two Observations are made upon it: First, That our Saviour's words at the Institution of the Sacrament are not to be understood in a literal sense, as she asserts. Secondly, That if they were, yet neither can her Doctrin be inferred from them, nor her Practice be justified by them.

§ 9. The first of these is proved, 1<sup>st</sup> From the nature of the thing, in that it contradicts our Sense, which are shewn to be proper Judges in this Case, as well as any other. The imposition also of the Schoolmen is detected, in treating on this subject in improper terms; and farther it is also shewn that in this sense they cannot agree with the concomitant expressions as well before as after the Institution.

§ 10. The same thing is proved 2<sup>dly</sup>. From the design of the Institution, which is shewn and explained, and then compared with the Passover, and other Sacrifices among the Jews; and so both the Practice and the Benefits thereof are illustrated, by shewing what they did, and what they expected.

§ 11. It is proved also 3<sup>dly</sup>, From the occasion of that expression, which is shewn to be a parallel Phrase constantly in use among the Jews at the Celebration of the Passover, and so by the evident meaning of their words, the sense of our Saviour is fully explained.

§ 12. The Doctrin of the Church of England in this Point is shewn to agree with that of the Fathers, and the ancient Doctrin of the Church of Rome  
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her self. This is shewn to be still evident in the Roman Missal, although it hath been alter'd since the days of St. Ambrose, to make it more conformable to the present Doctrine.

§ 13. The former Observation is proved 4thly, From our Saviour's own Declaration, John vi. Where he tells his Disciples that he is spiritually to be understood; and therefore, as is further observed, not only St. Paul, but even the aforesaid Missal calleth the Sacrament Bread after its Consecration.

§ 14. Another Comparison is made between the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, and that of the Church of England, as to the consequences of them, and thereby shewn that in the Church of Rome Men hazard their Salvation on the truth of an Opinion that may be false, and more than probably is so; for none, not the least advantage if it should be true.

§ 15. The other Observation also is propounded, and therein it is shewn that our Saviour's words in the literal sense can only respect his Body, and that too as it was dead, and offer'd up to God in Sacrifice. And several Reasons are offered thence to shew, that this is not a proper Object for Divine Worship, and therefore observed that the Council of Trent to justify their Practice, do strein the words abundantly beyond all that they can bear, without any Reason or Authority for it.

§ 16. Another danger is observed even in going to Mass, as it is in the general Practice of the Church of Rome, in that many are always present whenever the Sacrament is Administred, who are not in a fit state to be Partakers of it; and this is shewn from Scripture, as well as the Practice of the Primitive Christians.

§ 17. Some other Particulars of the like nature are proposed, and briefly touchs to shew the further evidence of the Proposition discuss: And so the Conclusion is made with an Exhortation to return.

## A Letter



A  
 L E T T E R  
 T O A  
 Friend, &c.

S I R,

**A**S every Man's Salvation is his Principal Concern, and ought to be the chief end of all his Undertakings, so no Action whatsoever can be justly lyable to Censure, that is either founded on that motive, or even tends to that design. But it is very unreasonable to find fault with him, that shall change his Sentiments of Religion, and consequently make an open Profession of it; provided that he acts directly upon truly Christian Motives, according to a real apprehension of the Truth, and a serious Conviction of the Conscience. The only thing that in this Case is liable to Censure, being a base compliance with the thoughts of other Men, or a change of the True Religion upon false inducements; since neither God nor Man can be secure of his Fidelity, whom Interest can bribe to act against his Conscience.

It is therefore no small Satisfaction unto me, and I believe also to the rest of all your Friends, that being well acquainted with your former Conversation, we believe your sincerity in all that you have done, and that no Temporal advantage (the too common spur of mean and fickle Spirits) could ever incline

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your

your thoughts to entertain a Notion, but as you were persuaded of and confided in its Truth. So that either the want of a due Consideration in respect of your Motives to believe, or some great mistake in your Notion of Religion, and that as well in respect of the Faith which you deserted, as of that which you embrace, have ever appeared to me as the reason of your Change; that you should quit those Principles wherein you were Bred, for such as upon enquiry can never appear unto you, either so Rational or so Christian. As it is the duty of every Christian therefore, to endeavour the satisfaction of his offended Brother, and to rectifie those Errors that have seduced him from the Faith, so I think my self obliged, by the special ties of Friendship, to be peculiarly concerned in your Restitution, and not only to discover to you, the Sophistry of those Arguments that have imposed upon you, but also to explain those Truths, wherewith you seem unacquainted.

For if the account be true, which I have had of your Desertion, your Motives to leave the Church of *England*, and Embrace the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, were these: A desire to live more truly in the Communion of the Catholick Church; and to become more Orthodox in your Faith and Worship. If then I can make it evident that you were mistaken in both these great Proposals, and that a contrary event in both, is the sure result of this your undertaking; It will be reasonable to expect your Repentance for what you have done, and a Reconciliation to that Mother whom you have forsaken.

§. 1. How the first of these Proposals could ever influence your Practice, is a very hard thing to be imagined; or why you should phanse now, that you are more in the Communion of the Catholick Church, than you were among us before your Change, is really a Conceit that I cannot find the ground of. Since the common imposition by the Name of Catholick, must be too slight to move a Man of Learning: When the Name of *Roman Catholick* is but an usurpt Title, that carries little less than a contradiction in the terms. I know indeed, there is an Error in the Notion of Church-Government, that is too prevalent with many Christians, and may possibly seduce them from the Truth of their Religion, to submit unto those Laws that can't oblige them: And that is, That the Government of the Catholick Church on Earth is Originally Monarchical, and consequently

consequently that the Unity thereof consists, in the due subjection of all the Members unto the Dominion of one Universal Bishop. So that no Man can be a Christian, or in the Communion of the Catholick Church, but he that will submit unto the Pope's Authority. But in Truth it is fully evident from the Scriptures, from the Constitution of the Church, and from the practice of all Christians in the Primitive Ages, that the Government of the Church on Earth, is Aristocratical, and that the Unity thereof, doth eminently consist in the Communion of all its Members. So that every Person that makes Profession of the Christian Faith, and lives in the Communion of any particular Church or Society of Christians, he is certainly in the Communion of the Catholick Church of Christ; and according to the sincerity of his Profession, he hath an undoubted Right unto all her Promises. For first the Scriptures do expressly tell us<sup>1</sup>, that Christ Selected not one alone, but twelve Apostles,<sup>2</sup> *Mat. x. 1.* and<sup>3</sup> that he gave them all but one Commission jointly, as well *Mark iii.* as made them by it all equal in Authority: That he was so far<sup>14.</sup> from constituting one as his Vicar upon Earth, with an Absolute Dominion over all his Brethren; that he forbid such Ambition as disagreeable with his Laws, and Ordained Humility to be their way of Government. *Ye know* (saith he, *Mat. xx. 25.*) *that the Princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister: And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant.* Intimating clearly, that Ecclesiastical Authority is not like the Dominion of the *Gentils*, which was altogether managed in a Despotical way of Government: But as he himself was a pattern of Humility, and submitted unto Death for the good of his People; so their joint Power should consist in serving others, without any pretence unto a Temporal Dominion. *St. Paul*, therefore most evidently refers the building of the Body of Christ (which is certainly the Catholick Church) not to any one, but unto the Apostles in the plural number, *Ephes. iv. 11, 12.* and although he was himself the last of all that Order, being, as he saith, *1 Cor. xv. 8, 9.* the least of the Apostles, as one that was born out of due time: Yet he assures the *Galatians*, *Galat. ii. 7.* that in point of Authority in the Church of Christ, he was inferior unto no Man, in that the

Gospel of the Uncircumcision was committed unto him, as that of the Circumcision was to *Peter*. And consequently then, *St. Peter's* Principality (if he had any) was limited to the *Jews* that were Converted to the Faith, and not extended to the *Gentils*, over whom he ne're presided. So that in this pretence of a Succession from the Prince of the Apostles, the Pope can have no claim to a Jurisdiction in our Countries, except he can derive our Pedigree from those of the Circumcision.

But to manifest more clearly, that the Church of *Rome* is not the whole Tree or Body of Christians, no nor so much as the Root thereof, *St. Paul* not only reckons her among the Branches, *Rom. xi. 17.* but doth expressly admonish her not to usurp Dominion, as if he were suspicious of her future greatness, *Μη ἐγπαυνησῇ* (saith he) *τὴν κλῆδον*, *Do not boast against*, or rather, *do not insult over the Branches.* But if thou boast, or insult thus, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. *Ib. v. 18.* And lastly, to shew the World farther, that it was but a particular Church, and not the Catholick, to whom he wrote that Epistle to the *Romans*; he threatens her, *v. 22.* with being cut off or totally destroyed, if she continueth not in the Goodness of God: Whereas Christ hath expressly promised to his Universal Church, *that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her*, *Mat. xvi. 18.* If any Man shall urge against me, that the Church to whom our Saviour made this promise, must be founded on *St. Peter* (as the Text expresses it) and consequently it can be no other but the Church of *Rome*, who claims all her Rights and Priviledges from him. I answer, 1<sup>st</sup>. That the whole Church of Christ may be said in some Sense, to have been built upon *St. Peter*; in that he was the first of the Apostles, that Preacht the Gospel after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them; and it is obvious, that by his Sermon so many were Converted to the Faith, that a Church was founded thereby at *Jerusalem*; and this being the first Fruits of the Christian Religion, the whole Building might properly be represented by it; and so that Promise of our Saviour doth not respect the Church of *Rome*, whatsoever her pretences are, but the whole Society or Body of Christians. 2<sup>dly</sup>, That *St. Augustine* in Expounding of that Text, tells

us; that by the Rock, Christ meant himself, and not St. Peter: And also, that St. Peter is not to be understood in that place, and many other in the Scripture, as a single Person, but as fully representing the whole Society or Body of Christians, to whom the Promises were made, and all those Favours given. For Christ's Question in that place, was evidently proposed to all the Disciples, and so the Answer to it appears in the name of all; and whatever gift or promise was thus made to one, is to be understood as having a respect to all: Since it is evident, that there is no one particular Benefit or Power granted by our Saviour unto St. Peter, but what the rest of the Apostles (as the Fathers have observed) had an equal Right to, and as great a Concern in. And if we consult our Ecclesiastical Records, we shall find this Commission to be Executed thus \*; and (although St. Paul tells us, that the care of all the Churches came upon him daily, 2 Cor. xi. 28.) yet both in planting of the Church, and in Governing it being planted, no one single Person presided over all, but they acted all alike as Members of a Society. And when they were called away by God to be rewarded for their Labours, they left the same Form of Government with the Bishops their Successors, who maintained it constantly for several Ages following. And whenever any Dispute or Controversie arose among them, that was destructive to their Faith or Discipline (as it was observed among the Apostles themselves before †), they took care

of the Disciples unto them, and ordained several Deacons to take care of the Poor.

Acts xv. 6. And the Apostles came together for to consider of this matter, viz. whether it were necessary for the Gentiles to be Circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses; which was afterward determined by them; v. 28.

‡ Sic me sapissimè sic exposuisse quod à Domino dictum est: Tu es Petrus, & super hanc Petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam, ut super hunc intelligeretur quem confessus est Petrus, dicens tu es Christus filius Dei vivi: ac si Petrus ab hac Petrà appellatus personam Ecclesia figuraret, qua super hanc Petram aedificatur, & accepit claves regni celi. Non enim dictum est ibi tu es Petra, sed tu es Petrus: Petra autem erat Christus, quem confessus Simon (sicut tota Ecclesia confitetur) dictus est Petrus. August. Retract. l. 1. cap. 21. Tom. 1. col. 39. edic. Basil. 1556.

Non enim sine causa inter omnes Apostolos hujus Ecclesia Catholica personam sustinet Petrus: huic enim Ecclesia claves regni calorum datae sunt, cum Petro datae sunt; & cum ei dicitur, ad omnes dicitur amas me? Pasce oves meas. Ib. de Agon. Christ. cap. 30. Tom. 3. col. 776.

Cui S. Petro totius Ecclesia figuram gerenti Dominus ait, super hanc Petram, &c. Ibid. Epist. 165. Tom. 2. Col. 751.

\* Επὶ πάντων ἐκκλησιῶν ὁ ἰσχυρὸς τῶν διακονῶν ἐναγγλίσαν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀποστέλλαν, καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν, vide Euseb. Histor. Eccl. l. 2. cap. 3.

Act. vi. 2.  
The twelve  
called the  
multitude

for

for to decide it in a Synod or Assembly. And we never find that any single Person under the pretence, either of being Infallible; or of having a Supream Power over all the rest, did undertake for to determine what was thus Disputed; but the Decree of the whole Church was required to decide it, as

<sup>4</sup> Σύνοδοι δὲ καὶ συνεκρήσεις ἐπισκοπῶν ἐπὶ ταῦτον ἐγένοντο\* πάντες τὸ μᾶλλον δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ἄνθρωποι τοῖς πᾶσι τοῖς χρόνοις διεπύοντο. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 22. de Pastorate.

Etiam de Hæres. Arian. Δι' ἀμφοτέρω τῶν ὁρῶν ὁ Βασίλειος ταχυστάσιον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν σύνοδον διὰ τὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον συνεκρῆται τὰς πασχαζῶν ἐπιστολὰς διὰ γεγραμμένων εἰς Νίκειαν τῆς Βιθυνίας ἀπὸ τῶν πατριάρχων. Sozom. Hist. Eccl. l. 1. cap. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Vide Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 4. cap. 15. & 22. etiam l. 5. c. 1. 4. 23. & l. 7. c. 29. & 30.

<sup>8</sup> Hoc erant unique ceteri Apostoli quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio pradii & honoris & potestatis, sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur. Primatus Petri datur (ratione scilicet ordinis, non jurisdictionis, ut observatum dignum est) ut una Christi Ecclesia, & una Concilium monstretur. Cyprian. de Unitat. Ecclesie pag. 234. edit. Paris. 1643. item.

Episcopatus unus est, cuius à singulis insolidum pars tenetur. Ib.

<sup>9</sup> Vide the Case of Marcion, Excommunicated by his Father the Bishop of Synope in Pontus, as it is related by Epiphanius: And the proceedings of Synesius against Andronicus, concerning the Excommunicated Persons in the Church of Ptolemais. Both which could not be received into the Communion of the Church of Rome, without particular Satisfaction in their respective Churches; as it is observed by Mr. Thorndike. Epilog. to the Tragedy of the Church of England. l. 1. c. 10.

the regular Act of the whole Society <sup>6</sup>: Some of the Bishops being still assembled in a Synod or Council, and the rest submitting unto their determinations. Thus their Unity was maintained in the matters of greatest moment, and by their <sup>7</sup> *Litteræ Formatae*, or circular Epistles in all the things of smaller consequence; and so they preserved themselves entire, as one Society or Body of Christians; not by any Superiority of one over the rest, but by the right hand of fellowship from one to another <sup>8</sup>. And each of them was so perswaded of the Unity of the Catholick Church which was thus preserved, that whosoever was excluded from the Communion of any one particular Church, he was adjudged as cut off from the Communion of the whole: And could not be received into another Congregation, until he was reconciled unto that Church which he offended <sup>9</sup>. So that the Catholick Church of Christ cannot be confined to any Country, nor yet limited or restrained to one peculiar Governour: but it contains the whole Body or Society of Christians, even all that are Baptized into the Covenant of Grace. And as every particular Church is at Unity in her self, by the submission or agreement of all her Members under one Governour, so is the Unity of the Catholick Church maintained



maintained by the agreement or correspondence of those Governours, whereby they do compose one Catholick Society. And therefore it is well observed, that there can be no more necessity of an Universal Bishop to establish and maintain this Unity in the Church, than there is of an Universal Monarch, to keep Peace and Commerce in the World: Since agreement among the Bishops, is as sufficient to the one, as correspondence among Princes, is unto the other. And as there cannot possibly be more than one Catholick Church, because it contains all Christians, and consequently all particular Churches whatsoever: So no one particular Society of Christians (let its extent be never so great, or Members numerous) can justly lay a claim unto that Title. Nor on the other hand, can any particular Church cease to be a Member of this Catholick, as long as she continues Christian, that is, as long as she retaineth the Holy Scriptures as the word of God and expounds their meaning by Catholick Tradition. And consequently then, no Society of Christians can be denied this privilege or any other Right and Claim which the Catholick Church pretends to, until they do renounce the Faith, and cease to be Christians, and so are no longer Members of the Body of Christ.

That the Church of *Rome* therefore is the Catholick Church, upon account, either of its Authority or comprehension, is no more a Truth, than that a part is the whole; the terms being equally evident, and therefore as plain in the conclusion. And if the Church of *Rome* is but a particular Church, and so a Member only of the Catholick: The Church of *England* also must have an equal claim unto the same Right and Title, while no one can deny, that she is Christian: And therefore she cannot lose her Property in the Promises of her Saviour, till she quits that Christianity whereon they are founded. Whence it evidently follows, that all the Members of the Church of *England*, are equally qualified for all Priviledges in Religion, and all Advantages in respect of the Catholick Church, which any Member of the Church of *Rome* can have a just claim or reason to pretend to.

§. 2. This is a Truth of so much Evidence, that all the Antient Christians, even in the Church of *Rome* believed it; otherwise their Decree against Re-baptizing Hereticks<sup>10</sup>, made by Pope *Cornelius*,  
<sup>10</sup> Vide Caranz. Sum. Concil. Carchaginens. pag. 68. edit. Rothomag. 1655.

must

must contradict the Principles of the Christian Religion, and deny Salvation unto Penitent Believers : For if no Man can be a Christian, but he that is in the Communion of the Catholick Church, and

<sup>11</sup> *Præter Ecclesiæ societatem aqua baptismi non valet ad salutem, sed potius ad perniciem. Augustin. contra Manich. Libr. 12. cap. 17. Tom. 6. col. 264.*

Baptism is not Sacramental nor Beneficial to Salvation, where the Person is excluded from the Society of Christians : Such Baptism then must be necessary to Salvation, as doth make a Man a Christian and a Member of that Society.

If any Person therefore that is Baptized by one, whom you call Heretick, and with whose Church you will not Communicate, be notwithstanding this so much a Christian, as that he is to be Baptized no more ; but if he shall change his Religion and become a Convert to the Church of *Rome*, they will receive him into their Communion, but never permit him to be Baptized again : I say then, this is a fair Concession from themselves, that they Believe that he was a Christian, and consequently a Member of the Body of Christ, before he was actually of their Communion. For the Scripture tells <sup>12</sup> us, that every Branch (although it is unfruitful, yet it) abideth in the Vine, until it is cut off, *viz.* by an Apostacie from the Faith ; nor can any new Branch be grafted in, but by that Sacrament of Baptism, which Christ ordained for it. And therefore it is evident, that those Antient Fathers did not believe that all Men were Apostates, who differed from them in Opinion as to Religion, but acknowledged that they were still Christians though Erroneous, and therefore would not repeat their Baptism which was compleat before, but received them Charitably by the Imposition of Hands. Which is a sufficient Evidence, that the Catholick Church of Christ is more extensive than the Church of *Rome*, and that a Christian may be a Member of the one, although he is not actually in the Communion of the other.

And therefore it is observable even at this day, that in the Administration of Baptism in the Church of *Rome*, no Man is obliged by his Baptismal Vow to believe their own Articles or Constitutions, but only to Profess the Christian Faith, as it is in common with all other Christians ; and which is not sufficient in a state of Maturity, to qualify any Person to be of their Communion. And consequently then those Articles are not

not necessary in order to be a Christian, although the proper Standard of the Church of *Rome*: But a Man may be a Member of the Catholick Church, that is not precisely one of her Communion. There is a Famous Act Recorded of the *Donatists in Africa* <sup>13</sup>, that is exactly parallel with our present case. They being scarce a National or particular Church, but rather a broken part or fraction of one, yet positively decreed themselves to be the Catholick Church of Christ, and in a Synod of their own party, formally Excommunicated all other Christians, that would not submit unto their determinations. But certainly, no Rational Man will say, that that Decree so made, was True and Authentick, or that all the Christian Church was obliged to submit unto it, and to be concluded by it, because it was boldly delivered as a Truth, and confidently asserted with over-great assurance, by a company of Men, that called themselves a Council: But rather on the contrary, such an Act is to be derided, and the Censure laught at, as contrary to Reason and all Humane Constitutions, which leave all Persons in their perfect Liberty, until by themselves it is submitted. And therefore St. *Augustine's* Argument <sup>14</sup> against them, is as

fully unanswerable in respect of us, who make the same Plea against the Church of *Rome*. For if you confess that I am a Christian, (although I am no *Papist*) you declare then, that the Christian Faith is openly profest without the Communion of the Church of *Rome*. And whosoever will

endeavour to reduce the *Catholick Church* to such a narrow compass, must be Guilty of the Schism that is occasioned by it, in excluding so many Christians from the Communion of Saints.

§. 3. But that the Church of *Rome* might render it self more a particular Church, and less the *Catholick* (if possible) than any other is, she hath of late years streightned her own extent extremely, by setting such new limits and restraints on her Communion, as former Ages never heard of, nor the *Catholick Church* ever prescribed or exacted.

Thus Purgatory <sup>15</sup> was far from being an Article of Faith, and necessary to Salvation in the days of St. *Augustine*. Or the Worshipping of Images, from

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<sup>13</sup> Cod.  
Concil.  
Tom. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Cum ergo fatearis me conversum ad Christianam fidem, cum ego nec ad Donatistas nec ad Rogatistas conversum sum, sine ulla dubitatione confirmas, prater Donatistas & prater Rogatistas esse Christianam fidem. August. Epist. 48. Tom. 2. col. 190.

<sup>15</sup> Qui hoc credunt (scilicet doctrinam de igne purgatorio post hanc vitam) & tamen Catholici sunt, humanâ quadam benevolentia mihi falli videntur. Aug. Enchirid. ad Laurent. Cap. 67. T. 3. c. 175. being

<sup>14</sup> *Nolite consecrari, iurbas imperitorum, qui vel in ipsa verâ religione superstitionis sunt, vel ita libidinibus dediti, ut obliiti sint quicquid promiserint Deo. Novi multos esse sepulcrorum & pistorum adoratores. &c. August. De mor. Eccl. Cath. L. 1. c. 34. T. 1. c. 774.*

*Vide etiam Tertull. de Idololatr. & Gregor. Epist. libr. 9. Ep. 9.*

Man, that is a real and most faithful Christian, that believeth in and conformeth himself to the Holy Scriptures, and also doth expound them in hard places, according to the Faith and Practice of the Primitive Christians: Yet notwithstanding all this, he is excluded by her as being an Infidel, and as far as in her lyeth, is deprived of the common Benefits, and the Privileges of a Christian. Whereas the Church which you Deserted, is evidently in this Case conformable to the Catholic, in that any faithful Christian of any other particular Communion, if he doth believe the Scriptures, and understand them in the Sense of the Universal Church (as it is delivered by the four General Councils) which you must also own to be the Catholic Faith, if your Opinion differs not from that of *Athanasius*: If this Man, I say, doth make it his business to live up unto those Rules, he is freely admitted into her Communion, and may publickly enjoy all the common Rights and Benefits of a Christian, without any other Injunction or Imposition on his Conscience. For none of her Articles are propounded with *Anathema's*, nor is there so much as a bar from her Communion inflicted on those Persons that do not Subscribe them; but (as their Title shews us) they were composed for Peace, for the avoiding of diversity of Opinions, and for the Establishing of consent touching True Religion. For she never did believe, that any Society on Earth (as the Church of

being a Duty in Religion before the second Council of Nice <sup>16</sup>. So that without believing things that are incredible, viz. Transubstantiation, the Infallibility of the Pope, &c. And doing things that are unpracticable, viz. Worshipping the Host, and the Virgin *Mary*, &c. no Man can be admitted now into her Communion, but a

Rome asserts it of her self <sup>17</sup>) had power either to alter or to add unto the Faith, or to contradict the Institution of our Saviour, and the practice of the Primitive Christians, with a bold tamen or non obstante to them, or ever to impose new Articles of Faith upon

<sup>17</sup> *Licet Christus post cenam instituit, & suis discipulis administraverit sub utraque specie panis & vini hoc venerabile sacramentum; amen hoc non obstante sacrorum canonum autoritas & approbata consuetudo Ecclesia servavit & servat, &c.*

upon the People, as absolutely necessary unto their Salvation, which the Primitive Christians for some hundreds of years, were never known to have thought, or heard of. So that (according to your own Notion) if to be Catholick, is to be of no Party nor Faction in Religious Matters, but a Christian in full latitude and in respect of the Church in general, since every Member of the Universal Church must adjoin himself to some particular Society; he that is in the Communion of the *Church of England*, must appear to live in the Communion of the *Catholick Church*, more than any Member of the *Church of Rome*: And you were strangely mistaken in your Sentiments of Religion, when in this Notion of the *Catholick Church*, you quitted the one Communion, and Embrac'd the other.

§. 4. But perhaps you will tell me, that the *Church of Rome* is truly *Catholick*, not so much upon account of its extent or comprehension, or even the terms of Communion in her, as for her Antiquity and *Catholick Doctrin*; in that, she appears the same from the days of the Apostles, while the *Church of England*, as it is now establish'd, seems to take her date from the Reformation of her. If these should be your thoughts, there are two particulars that deserve to be considered by you. 1<sup>st</sup>. That no Article of Faith is maintained in the *Church of England* as necessary to Salvation, but what is evidently founded on the Holy Scriptures<sup>18</sup>, and consequently hath been believed and received as such, by every true Christian from the Primitive Ages. So that you cannot instance any one particular, that we hold as such, to which the universal rule of *Catholick Doctrin*, may not be easily and properly apply'd, viz. *Ab omnibus ubique & semper fuit creditum*. It was at all times, and in all places, and by all Men believed. Whereas every particular, wherein the *Church of Rome* doth differ from her, is also evidently of a later date; and it is easie to instance, whenever you require it, if not the particular time when it was introduc'd, at least a certain Age when it was not so believed. And consequently then the Doctrin of the *Church of Rome*,

*Licet in primitivâ Ecclesia hujusmodi Sacramentum reciperetur a fidelibus sub utraque specie, tamen hæc consuetudo ad evitandum aliqua pericula & scandala est rationabiliter introducta, &c. Concil. Constantiens. Sess. 13.*

*Insuper, Synodus Tridentina declarat, quamvis Redemptor noster in supremâ illa cœna hoc Sacramentum in duabus speciebus instituerit, & Apostolis tradiderit: tamen satendum esse, etiam sub alterâ specie tantum, totum atque integrum Christum, verumque Sacramentum suum. Concil. Trident. Sess. 5. can. 3.*

<sup>18</sup> Art. 6.

as she is at variance with the *Church of England*, cannot with any Truth be stiled Catholick, nor as it is such, be the occasion of your Change.

§. 5. The Second particular is, that the Reformation of any thing, doth not extirpate its former being, and new make it, nor yet essentially change it from the same thing that it was before; but only rectifying what was formerly amiss, and removing all things that were repugnant to its Nature, it leaves the Being essentially the same, but renders it abundantly more pure and illustrious. The *Church of England* therefore, cannot be truly said to have lost or changed any of the Fundamentals of the Christian Religion by her Reformation, or any wise to cease from being the same *Church* that it was before; since whatsoever was received by the Primitive Christians, she still holdeth, believeth, and openly professeth; and whatsoever was not so, she never could esteem as part of her Religion. And she hath made no change, either in her Faith or Practice, but by rejecting of such Unchristian Novelties, as in the times of Ignorance and oppressing Tyranny were silyly introduc'd, and forcibly imposed upon her. Whereas in the Canons of the *Council of Trent* (which do comprize the Faith, and regulate the Communion of the *Church of Rome*) not only many things reputed by the Ancient Fathers, as uncertain, (for instance, *Purgatory*<sup>19</sup> (as I shewed before)

<sup>19</sup> Tale aliquid (scilicet, Purgatio à peccatis) etiam post hanc vitam fieri incredibile non est, & mirum sit queri potest. August. *Enchir.* ad Laurent. cap. 69. Tom. 3. col. 176. vide etiam.

but also some that are evidently false, viz. Transubstantiation, as will appear hereafter) are not only therein determined, and as Articles of your Faith, made a part of your Religion, but also delivered to us with an Ana-

thema to Unbelievers, and as the express terms of the Communion. If therefore you will say, that the Religion or the Being of a Church, is to take its beginning from the last system of the Christian Faith, or the last change of Discipline that was Establish'd in her; and will consider farther, that the Faith of a Christian, is to be measured à credendis, not à negatis, from the points to be believed, not those uncertainties that are deny'd by him; You will find it necessary to acknowledge, that the Old Religion is maintained in the *Church of England*, and that that of the *Church of Rome* is of a later



later date : Since the *Church of England* (as I shew'd before) stands by the Primitive Rule of Faith, and what ever was so determined by the first four General Councils ; and this without the mixture of any Secular Notions, or any thing that is opposite, either to Reason or the Scriptures ; and consequently then, she professeth the same Faith, and the same Religion, which she ever did, and is not essentially changed since she was first Establish'd. But the *Church of Rome* hath evidently made many changes and innovations, both in Faith and Practice, and hath imposed new Articles as necessary to Salvation, which were never so reputed before her Injunction. And therefore in point of Doctrin as also, she cannot be truly called the *Catholic Church*, nor on that account have drawn you to her Communion.

§. 6. As to your second Motive, founded upon the Excellence, both of Faith and Practice, which you supposed in the *Church of Rome*, as that it is more Orthodox than the *Church of England* : Should I Examine at large every particular Disputation, into which this Point may lead us, to determine it, and which is already extant and discust fully upon this Subject ; it would probably require more time than I can have leisure to expend, and withal, would seem impertinent to my present design, which is your Satisfaction, with all brevity and plainness : Especially, when so much hath been said already by more Learned Persons, that it is almost as impossible to add to, as to answer their Arguments ; and I cannot but suppose, that you are acquainted with them, although you seem not satisfied nor convinced by their Evidence. It is certainly sufficient in this case, to have recourse but to our foundation ; that our Faith and Worship both, are wholly founded upon the Scriptures, have the consent of the *Universal Church*, backt with Reason and an uninterrupted Practice, which warrants and maintains whatever we hold as necessary, against the force of all manner of Opponents. Whereas, the Doctrin and Devotion of the *Church of Rome*, is chiefly built upon a loose Tradition, or rather indeed, the Projects and Inventions of Monastick Votaries ; such <sup>as</sup> as True Religion cannot countenance, <sup>Quare si</sup>  
<sup>solus Chri-</sup>  
*stus audiendus est, non debemus attendere quid alius ante nos faciendum putaverit, sed quid*  
*qui ante omnes est, Christus prior fecerit. Neque enim hominis consuetudinem sequi oportet, sed*  
*Dei veritatem.* Cyprian. Epist. 63. ad Cæciliam. pag. 149.

nor the Law of God be perswaded to comply with. In so much, that should a Stranger but inspect our *Churches*, and knowing only that God is a Spirit, and that they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth; should he examine the grounds and circumstances of Publick Devotion in them, he would discover clearly the Nature of our Religion, both consonant to Reason and the God we Worship; while the other is hid in Ceremonies, buried in external Formalities, and makes but a meer shew or pageant of Devotion.

§. 7. But since however, there is one particular case of moment, in deciding whereof, this Question may be resolved also, *viz.* Whither the *Church of Rome*, or *Church of England*, is more Pure and Orthodox, both in Faith and Worship? It will not be amiss to enquire into it briefly, and compare our Faith and Practice, in relation to the Sacrament, which is the most Solemn branch of our Devotion. For I shall ever acknowledge it as an obligation from you, if you will be fair in this particular, and communicate your own Thoughts freely without prevarication, whether you can submit your Reason in this particular, to that Doctrine of your *Church*, that is so much against it? Whither you can believe in your Conscience, as it is openly profest, that a Priest by consecrating Bread and Wine according to the Missal, can change their substance into that of God? Or so Establish the Divinity in those Creatures, or under the covert of their Accidents, as really to make them, or what you see upon the Table, in their Shape, to become a proper Object to be Worshipt and Adored? For since nothing can be more absurd, nor indeed more criminal in Religion, than to apply God's Worship to any thing that is not God; there is nothing less than a belief of this particular, that can be pleaded by you, to justify your Practice, when you Worship and Adore the Consecrated Host in the constant Exercise of your Publick Devotion. Let us enquire therefore, I beseech you, into the foundation of this Faith, and how this Notion (which appears impossible to Mankind) should come to have that Credit in the Church, as to be made a Principle of the Christian Religion; and not only be received as an Article of Faith, but to be made the ground-work also of such a dangerous Practice.

§. 8. The

§. 8. The Church of Rome dogmatically tells us <sup>22</sup>, that our Blessed Saviour at the Institution of his Holy Supper, changed the substance of the Bread and Wine, into the substance of his own Body and Blood. For saying of the Bread, *This is my Body*, and of the Wine, *This is my Blood*, and in both Expressions, being literally to be understood by all Men, his Expressions cannot be true, except this change be really effected: It being impossible in a literal Sense, that the same thing at the same time, can be real Bread, and also the Body of Christ; and therefore they believe that after the words of Consecration are pronounced, Christ himself with his Body and Blood, his Soul and his Divinity, and not any longer Bread and Wine, do really remain upon the Table; and so they Adore the Consecrated Host, as being really then the Person of Christ, who is the Saviour, God, and Judge of all the World. Now, Sir, if you will but seriously consider all those words, which our Saviour Christ hath spoken on this Subject, together with the end, design, and occasion of his speaking them, it will not appear difficult to prove clearly to you, First, that those words of Christ are not thus literally to be interpreted; but directly contrary to this Doctrine, their true Sense is altogether Spiritual and Mystical. And 2<sup>dly</sup>, That if they were literally to be understood by all Men, even in the utmost Sense those words can bear, yet they will neither assert what the Council of Trent Decrees, nor justify your Practice in Worshiping the Host.

§. 9. First, I say that the Words of our Saviour Christ in the Institution of this Sacrament, cannot be understood in a literal Sense, but must have a figurative or mystical signification.

*Verum Christi corpus & sanguis in Sacramentis altaris sub speciebus panis & vini veraciter continentur, transubstantiationis pane in corpus, & vini in sanguinem potestate Divinâ Concil. Lateran. cum 1.*

*Si quis negaverit mirabilem illam & singularem conversionem totius substantiæ panis in corpus & totius substantiæ vini in sanguinem, manentibus tantaxat speciebus panis & vini: quam quidem conversionem Catholica Ecclesia apertissimè Transubstantiationem appellat, anathema sit. Concil. Trid. Sess. 3. can. 2.*

*Hoc tam admirabile sacramentum in ultimâ cenâ Redemptorem nostrum instituisse Sancta Synodus docet, cum post panis viniq; benedictionem, se suum ipsius corpus illis præbere ac suum sanguinem, desertis ac perspicuis verbis testatus est. Quæ verba à sanctis Evangelistis commemorata, cum propriam illam & apertissimam significationem præ se ferant, secundum quam à patribus intellecta sunt, &c. Concil. Trid. Sess. 3. can. 3.*

*Si quis negaverit in sanctissimo Eucharistia sacramento contineri verè realiter & substantialiter corpus & sanguinem, unà cum animâ & divinitatè Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ac præinde totum Christum, &c. Anathema sit. Conc. Trid. Sess. 3. can. 1.*

cation. And this doth appear fully from the Nature of the thing, the Design of the Institution, the Occasion of the Expression, and our Saviour's own Judgment as to their Interpretation.

As to the Nature of the thing, it is a sufficient proof, that any Text of Scripture is not literally to be understood by Christians, if its common reading contradicts the Rules of Sense, and Principles of Philosophy, or destroys the ground-work of all certainty and knowledge, and so roots up the foundation of Religion in general. And if a Man, by being a Christian, is to take those words of Christ in a literal Sense, and to believe, that that is Flesh, which by his sight, touch, tast, and smell, he fully and clearly discovers to be Bread, all those recited mischiefs, are the necessary consequence, and there can be no Rule of any certainty in Religion. In so much, that no Man can be sure, that there is a Bible, or that any such words as these we treat of, are Recorded in it; or indeed, that any thing else is written in order to his Salvation, if he must not trust his Senses, being rightly disposed in relation to a proper Object, with a fit Medium. If you say, that this is an improper Object, because it is a Substance, when Accidents alone do incur the Senses. I say, that there is no other way to know a Substance, but by the Accidents that are proper to it; and if it were possible for all the Accidents that are proper to one Subject, to inhere another, it would be impossible to determine, which is which, or ever truly to distinguish any one thing from another. But it is also evident, that a Humane Body is the real thing we here treat of; and that this is a proper Object for our Senses, appears plainly to us from the practice of our Saviour, in that he recurr'd unto them, even after his Resurrection, and made them the only Judges of his Bodily Substance. *Behold* (saies he, *Luke xxiv. 39.*) *my hands and my feet, that it is I my self; handle and see, for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have.* So that either this Body of Christ supposed in the Sacrament, must be a proper Object for our Senses, or it is not that Body of Christ wherewith he arose from the Dead: And the Priest must create another Body, such as our Saviour never had, before he can adapt it to this Doctrin of the Sacrament. It is therefore evidently a device of the School-Men, to impose upon the Vulgar, that they generally discourse thus of the Object

Object of one Science, in terms and notions that are peculiar to another; and instead of Matter and Form, wherein the Essence of a Body doth consist, and which do evidently demonstrate, that every Humane Body doth consist of Limbs, hath Flesh and Bones with that Extent, Shape and Dimensions that are proper to it, and whereof all Mankind are equally sure and certain: All their Disputations are about its Substance and its Accidents, which are Metaphysical terms, and may agree with a Spirit, with whose Nature and Parts the wisest Men are unacquainted. And therefore abstracting from the Senses, wherein the least intelligent are sufficient Judges, they confound our Understanding in such intricacies and quilllets, that even they themselves cannot explain their meaning. And therefore I say, that either our Senses must be Judges in this case, as well as other Bodies, or else that the Body of Christ is not a <sup>22</sup> proper Body, as Nestorius heretofore did Heretically assert it; or else, that God hath appointed here, an irresistible deception of all Mankind, continually in that which is most evident, and sure to be relied on, and how agreeable these are to the nature of Man, or to the justice of God (especially if he should punish us for being so deceived) I refer to any Man of reason to determine.

I will not trouble you with the recital of any of those Arguments which demonstrate this Change to be impossible, <sup>23</sup> and that the Doctrine doth imply so many contradictions, that it is no proper Object for Almighty Power. But this I must desire you to observe, that if a substantial change were made of the Elements by the words of Consecration, then the act of the Apostles was manifestly different from the command of Christ whereon it was founded. For nothing can be clearer from the Text, than that our Saviour gave the Bread, and commanded them to take and eat, (that is, Bread) the words of its Consecration being not yet pronounced. If then they did eat another substance and not Bread, who can truly say that they fulfilled the Commandment of the Lord, or Received the Sacrament according to his order?

*22* *Christum ubique totum presentem esse non dubites tanquam Deum, & in eodem templo Dei esse tanquam inhabitantem, dum, & in loco aliquo cali, propter veri corporis modum. August. ad Dardan. Ep. 57. T. 2. c. 285.*

*Vide The absolute impossibility of Transubstantiation demonstrated by Mr. Johnson.*

§. 10. As to the Design in this most Sacred Institution, it appears to be the same in relation unto Christians as that of the Passover was unto the *Jews*. That as they did believe in a *Messias* that was to come, and of whom their Sacrifices were but Types and Shadows, and so were partakers of the Sacrifice that he was to offer, by eating of those Sacrifices that did Typically represent it: So we that now believe in a *Messias* already come, should in a parallel manner become Partakers of the same Oblation, and by an external act like unto what they did in every Circumstance, we should obtain the benefit of that propitiatory Sacrifice, and really and truly be made Partakers of it. And therefore our Saviour Christ appointed that Bread and Wine should be received by his Disciples in the place and stead of his Body and Blood; which were the real Sacrifice that he offered unto God for Man, and very improper things to be actually eaten or drank by Christians; and therefore he calls the Bread his Body, and the Wine his Blood, not as being really the things themselves, but as Instituted by him to represent them to us. So that by a due participation of these Creatures according unto Christ's appointment, it is certain that all Christians are partakers of that Sacrifice which he offer'd to God for them; and the Bread and Wine being duly Consecrated and Received in the nature of a Sacrament, the Body and Blood of Christ is really and truly received by the Faithful in them; not that the Elements are changed in themselves, or that there is any real alteration of their substance; but the act is Spiritual in respect of the Receivers, who take them not for Food, but as a Mystery in Religion; and therefore they do not receive them in their common notion as they are Bread and Wine, that is, proper Food to nourish or sustain the Body, but as they represent the Body and Blood of Christ, and are appropriated by Faith to nourish and support the Soul. And since then this Sacrament was ordained to become

<sup>24</sup> *Ideo hic dicit manducare panem quod est Sacrificium Christianorum. Aug. de Civit. Dei. l. 17. cap. 5. Tom. 5. col. 954.*

*Hunc panem significavit manna, hunc panem significavit altare Dei. Sacramenta illa fuerunt, in signis diversa sunt, in re qua significatur paria sunt. Ibid. in Johan. Tract. 26. Tom. 9. col. 228.*

a Sacrifice to Christians, as *St. Augustine* tell us, <sup>24</sup> and that those Patriarchs of old who believed in a *Messias* that was to come, were as actual Partakers of that Sacrifice which he hath offered as we can be: For they all eat the same spiritual Meat, and they all drank the same



same spiritual Drink, 1 *Cor.* x. 3. Neither is there Salvation in any other, *Acts* iv. 12. And yet it was impossible that they should eat the Flesh of Christ and drink his Blood according to the Letter, because his Body was not framed yet, nor actually born: It is therefore rational to conclude that we are still Partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ in the same manner that they were, not in a Literal but a Spiritual participation. Since the reception of them by Faith only was fully sufficient to the Salvation of the one, and therefore is all that is necessary to the Salvation of the other.

§. 11. And this gives us a fair light into the reason or occasion of this Figurative Expression; in that the Sacrament of the Eucharist being Instituted by our Saviour in the place of the Jewish Passover, which was now to be abolished, many of the External Rites were still retained, to shew that all those Types are now compleated: And therefore as it was usual at the introduction of the Paschal Lamb, for the Priest or some other of the Company to tell the People that this is the Lamb that was slain in *Egypt*, when the Lord passed over the houses of our Fathers, and slew the *Egyptians*: And again, after Supper was ended (distributing Bread and Wine to every one in order) was wont to tell them, This is the Bread of Sorrow which our Fathers eat in *Egypt*: Whereas all Men know that it could not possibly be that very Lamb that was slain, nor that very Bread that was eaten in *Egypt*, but another Lamb, and other Bread Instituted by God's order in the stead or commemoration of it: So our Saviour likewise at the Institution of the Sacrament using the same Phrase upon the like occasion, ought to be understood in the same manner of expression. And since it was in conformity to their constant way of speaking, that when he Instituted Bread and Wine to be Received by Christians in the Commemoration of his own death, as that Lamb was of the Passover, he said of the Bread *This is my Body*, and of the Wine *This is my Blood*, we are to understand by it no more than if he had told us, that they are Elements Sacramentally to be Received in the stead and commemoration of his Body and Blood. So that although there is nothing Corporeally upon the Table after the Consecration but the same things that were there before, nor eaten by the Receivers, but very Bread, with the very same substance that it always had: Yet in the

notion of a Sacrament, and as a Religious Mystery, it is not to be received as meer or common Bread by any true or faithful Christian. But we verily believe that the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ is actually and truly partaken of in those Elements; and as the Church of *England* Emphatically expresses it, *The Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and Received by the Faithful in the Lord's-Supper.*

§. 12. This you cannot but know to be the Doctrin of the Sacrament as it is received in the Church of *England*; and if you will consult Antiquity you shall find that it hath not only been the general Doctrin of the Universal Church, but particularly of the Church of *Rome* in former Ages. For the Ancient Fathers generally speak <sup>25</sup> of the Spiritual and Figurative Being of Christ's Body in the Sacrament, and do expressly call the same thing at the same time both Bread, and the Body of Christ; which is impossible to be a truth in the Literal sense, and therefore it is necessary to understand it Mystically, or reject those expressions as false and incongruous. And it is also observable in other places, when some of them fly higher in their Rhetorical expressions, and to enflame the Zeal, or to raise the Devotion of their Auditors, who were apt to think too grossly of this Sacred Ordinance, seem to express this change

<sup>25</sup> *Acceptum panem  
& distribu-  
tum disci-  
pulis corpus  
suum illum  
fecit, hoc est  
corpus meum  
dicendo,  
id est, figu-  
ra corporis  
mei. Tertul  
adversus  
Marcion.*

l. 4. cap. 40. p. 733. edit. Rothomag. 1662.

*Nec panem reprobat, qui ipsum corpus suum representat, etiam in sacramentis prohibens mendicantibus creatis.* Ibid. Lib. 1. cap. 14. pag. 624.

*Nam quando Dominus corpus suum panem vocat, de multorum granorum adunatione conge-  
stum, populum nostrum quem portabat indicat adunatum; & quando sanguinem suum vinum  
appellat de botris atque acinis plurimis expressum atque in unum coactum; gregem item no-  
strum significat commixtione adunata multitudinis copulatum,* Cyprian. ad Magn. Ep. 75. pag. 209.

*Vita unicuique erit corpus & sanguis Christi, si quod in sacramento visibiliter sumitur, in ipsa veritate spiritualiter manducetur, spiritualiter bibatur,* August. de verb. Apost. Serm. 2. Tom. 10. col. 250.

*Ostendit ipse Dominus quid sit non sacramento tenus, sed revera corpus Christi manducare & ejus sanguinem bibere, hoc est enim in Christo manere, ut in illo maneat & Christus.* Ibid. de Civit. Dei L. 5. cap. 25. Tom. 5. col. 1313.

*Ac per hoc qui non manet in Christo, & in quo non manet Christus, proculdubio nec manducat spiritualiter carnem ejus nec bibit ejus sanguinem, licet carnaliter & visibiliter premat dentibus sacramentum corporis & sanguinis Christi.* Ibid. in Johan. Tract. 26. Tom. 9. col. 230.

*Ille instruit postea duodecem & ait illis, verba qua locutus sum vobis spiritus est & vita. Spiritualiter intelligite quod locutus sum. Non hoc corpus quod videtis manducaturus estis, & bibaturi illum sanguinem quem fusi sunt qui me crucifigent. Sacramentum aliquod vobis commendavi, spiritualiter intellectum vivificabit vos. Et si necesse est illud visibiliter celebrari, oportet tamen invisibiliter intelligi.* Ibid. Enar. in Psalm 98. Tom. 8. col. 1195.

which

which you desire. I say it is observable, that they often speak<sup>26</sup> not only beyond the truth and all that we believe, but even the very utmost that you your selves will own; and consequently there is no reliance upon such expressions, as shew not the Faith but the Fancy of their Author. Nay, although it is apparent that the *Roman Missal* hath been alter'd since the days of St. *Ambrose*,<sup>27</sup> to make it more conformable to your present Doctrin: Yet there is a memorable expression still retained in it, in the very Prayer of Consecration, wherein the Ancient Doctrin is sufficiently apparent. For it is certain that no Man wou'd ever pray to God to grant him less than he expected to receive, and yet it is obvious that (although they pretend to a Transubstantiation, yet) they desire no more there than what we Pray for who do not believe it. Their words are these, *Quam oblationem tu Deus in omnibus quesumus ut benedicam, &c. Facere digneris, ut nobis corpus & sanguis fiat dilectissimi Filii tui, &c.* Which Oblation we beseech thee O God to vouchsafe to render blessed, &c. that it may become to us the Body and Blood of thy most Beloved Son, &c. Since then the difference on debate is this, whether the Elements in the Sacrament are changed as to their substance, and so really made the Body and Blood of Christ *in se*, in themselves (as the Church of *Rome* asserteth) or whether without any such Change or Alteration of their Substance they become Spiritually or Sacramentally so *Nobis*, to us, who do Receive by Faith the Body and Blood of Christ in them (as the Church of *England* doth express it) I say it is sufficiently apparent that the Composers of the *Roman Missal* have delivered their Opinion for us, to be the same with that of the Church of *England*, and not with the present Church of *Rome*. So that the Ancient Doctrin of that Church is evidently for us, and whatever is profest in point of Faith upon other occasions, yet the truth in this place so far prevaileth as to be openly asserted, whenever Mass is Celebrated among you.

<sup>26</sup> *Ipsam igitur vides, ipsum tangis, ipsum comedis. Lingua cruciatur hoc admirabili sanguine. Chrysost. in Mat. Hom. 83. fol. 150. Edit. Basil.*

*Quam praeclarus est calix iste, quam religiosa est huius potus ebrietas? cruci haeremus, sanguinem sugimus, & intra ipsa redemptoris nostri vulnera figimus linguam. Author libr. De cena Domini in oper. Cyprian. insert. pag. 466.*

<sup>27</sup> *Fac nobis hanc oblationem ascriptam, rationabilem, acceptabilem, quod est Figura corporis & sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Ambros. de Sacrament. L. 4. cap. 5.*

§. 13. But lastly, this is not only the voice of Men, but agreeable to the Declaration of Christ himself, who directs all Christians not to understand him on this subject in a Literal Sense, but to expound his words Spiritually, as containing a Mystery. For in the sixth Chapter of St. John's Gospel he is very express as to the nature and design of this his Holy Institution, as most of the Ancient Doctors have always understood him (though <sup>28</sup> Bellarmine for

<sup>28</sup> *Non est Controversia an in toto corpore agatur de Eucharistia; constat enim non ita esse. Bellarm. de Euchar. L. 1. c. 5.*

special Reasons is of another Opinion) insomuch that if any Text of Scripture foundeth fair for Transubstantiation, it is to be lookt for in that Chapter. But

we find in the conclusion, that this was never intended by our Saviour. For when his Disciples were offended at his Doctrine, apprehending foolishly (as St. Augustine observes) <sup>29</sup> that they must be Canibals in order to be Christians, as if the eating of humane flesh was to be a Rite in their Religion; he rectifies their thoughts, and explains his meaning fully, v: 63. saying, *it is the Spirit that quickneth, the Flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit, and they are*

<sup>29</sup> *Ennar. in Psal. 98 ut antea*  
Sect. 12.

*Life*; that is as \* St. Augustine expounds it, they are spiritual to be understood by you, as containing a Mystery that will hereafter be apparent in the Institution of a Sacrament that will explain them. And therefore it is observable that St. Paul calls the Eucharist Bread, and not the Body of Christ, but as it is received. *The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all Partakers of that one Bread,* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. and in the following Chapter, v. 26, 27, 28. even after an account given of the Consecration of it, yet he is still express in calling it Bread; and if words are to be understood always in a literal sense, when no absurdity doth follow, the Missal saith the same thing in the Prayer after Consecration, calling it *Panem sanctum vite eternæ*, the Holy Bread of Eternal Life. All which would strangely derogate from the nature of the thing, if it were Christ's Body, and not Bread which they discourse of. But this is confirmed beyond all dispute by that expression of our Saviour at the Institution of it, *Do this in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death* 'till

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cor. xi. 26. Since first <sup>39</sup> it contradicts the common form of speaking to remember a present Object that stands before us, when we cannot make Reflections thus but upon absent things: And secondly, if Christ should actually come whenever the Sacrament is Administred, then that Holy Institution is no longer to continue, being to determine on our Saviour's coming; especially when we know <sup>37</sup> that it is no rarity, even in the Scripture, for a thing that represents or signifies another to bear the name or title of the thing represented.

<sup>39</sup> Nemo decoratur nisi quod in presentia non est positum. Aug. in Psalm. 37. Tom. 8. c. 312.

<sup>37</sup> Sola autem res quae significat ejus rei nomine quod significat nuncupari. Aug. in Levit. quest. 57. Tom. 4. col. 220.

§. 14. If then, Sir, there is no advantage to a Christian in the Carnal Manducation of the Body of Christ (as I suppose you will confess) and it is evident to all Men that in point of Faith, and as a Sacrifice, the Body and Blood of Christ are as really and truly received by the Faithful in the Church of England, as in the Church of Rome: You must needs acknowledge then that in this Point of Faith and Worship you have gotten no advantage by the change of your Religion; but rather on the contrary in the Rules of your Devotion, you hazard your Salvation upon an Opinion that may be false, and more than probably is so, for none, not the least advantage if it should be true. For if those Elements should not be changed by their Consecration according to your Fancy (and you know that besides all the reasons that can be offered against it, <sup>37</sup> there are a multitude of Circumstances that may obstruct their Change) grosser Idolatry cannot be committed than Men are daily guilty of in Worshipping the Host. And if you will believe Conserus in his judgement on the Case, and it is reasonable to allow him well acquainted with your Doctrin, you will find <sup>33</sup> that your Publick Devotion in this point of Worship doth exceed the very Heathens in their greatest Idolatry. And yet on the other hand, if those Elements should be changed as (you unreasonably believe,

<sup>37</sup> Potest autem defectus contingere ex parte materiae consecrandae, & ex parte personae adhibendae, & ex parte ministerii consecrantis. Quidquid enim horum defectu, scilicet materia debita, forma cum intentione, & ordo sacerdotalis in consecrante, non consecratur sacramentum. Missal. Roman. De defectu in celebratione Missal. Sect. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Si non datur Transsubstantiatio, tolerabilior foret eorum error, qui pro Deo calant suam auream, quam id gentiles Deo suis venerantibus, vel pannum ruinum in hostiam elevationem, quid de Lappi dictum, vel urva animalium, ut quondam Egiptii, quam eorum qui frustulam panis adhibent. Conser. Eucharist. contro.

but no Man can prove by solid Argument) it is also evident that our reception of them by Faith is every way as valid, as beneficial, and as effectual to Salvation, as can be imagined in your Carnal Manducation. Since it is the Spirit that quickneth, and the Flesh profiteth nothing; and it is not any action of the Body, but the purity and sincerity of the Mind and Soul that God respects in any Holy Exercise; and therefore it is this alone that ought to be regarded, which unites a Man to Christ, and brings down God's Gifts and Graces on him, by a due reception of that Holy Sacrament

\* 2 *Thess.*  
ii. 3, 4.

\* *Ibid.*  
v. 11.

§. 15. But notwithstanding all this, if you continue positive in this Opinion, and will resolutely adhere unto that \*Man of Sin that Exalteth himself above all that is called God, contradicting the Ordinances of Christ with a *Non Obstante* to his Institution of them: And that sitteth as God in the Temple of God, imposing Laws and Restrictions upon the Consciences of Men: In so much that you may rationally suspect your self to have fallen into the state of those unhappy Persons to whom \*God hath sent a strong delusion that they should believe a lye, and obstinately maintain these apparent Contradictions against all the force both of sense and reason: That I may abate at least your fondness for this error, or restrain that practice that against the Law of God is founded on it, I will offer my second Proposition also to be considered, That if those words of Christ (*This is my Body*) were to be taken in the literal sense, as effecting such a change as against sense and reason is asserted, to make the Proposition literally true: Yet I say they will neither justify your practice in worshiping the Host, nor maintain the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, as by the Council of *Trent* it is taught and explained. For it is plain that those words of Christ in the most

literal sense that they can bear, can have no relation farther than to his Body only, and this too in the most strict and limited notion of a Sacrifice, wherein Mankind are made Partakers of it: Since (as your selves confess) <sup>34</sup> the design of the Institution

<sup>34</sup> *Here at once is Instituted both a Sacrifice and a Sacrament.* A Sacrifice, in that it is ordained to continue the memory of Christ's death and oblation upon the Cross, and the application of the general virtue thereof to our particular necessities, by consecrating the several Elements, not into Christ's whole Person as it was born of the Virgin, or now is in Heaven, but the Bread into his Body apart, as betrayed, broken, and given for us; the Wine into his Blood apart, as shed out of his Body for Remission of Sins, and dedication of the New Testament, which be the Conditions of his Person, as he was in sacrifice and oblation.

Annotations on the New Testament Published at Rheims, on Mat. xxvi. 26.

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tion was only this, that all Men might become Partakers by it of the Sacrifice which Christ offered upon the Altar of the Cross, when he made a full atonement for the Sins of the whole World. Now we know that the nature of a Sacrifice is such, that it must be slain before it can be offered; and consequently then this Body of Christ (into which you do believe that the Elements are changed) must be dead as well as broken, and totally abstracted or separated from the Soul, as it was offered up in Sacrifice to God; and how this Body then in this very state and notion can be a proper Object for Divine Worship, is a thing that deserves to be very well considered. For it is very evident that it doth not contain the essence of a Man, since that consists chiefly in his rational Soul that is departed

from it, and to which St. *Augustine* tells us <sup>35</sup> that the Divinity was united. And therefore though all his Sufferings in the Flesh are truly attributed to him as the Son of God, because it was Christ that suffered, who really was that Sacred Person, yet when we say that he was buried, it is an improper way of speaking (as that <sup>36</sup> Father observes) and doth express no more but the bu-

rial of his Body only, since it is evident that it was not the Person of Christ, but only his Body that was subject to that Passion. We generally look upon it as an infinite condescension in Almighty God that he united his Divine unto our Human Nature even in its greatest purity and perfection: But to expect that this Divinity should be immediately united unto the grosser part of Man, even his Body or Carcass, when his Rational Soul is separated from it, and when you cannot truly say that even the Human Nature continues extant there; And much more to believe then that any Priest whatsoever can effect this condescension at his pleasure, and by the introduction of a Material Substance only unite the Divine Nature to the accidents of Bread and Wine; which must then be inherent in the whole Suppositum, or subsist by themselves, and so cease to be Accidents: These are thoughts too hard to be entertained of God, except he himself in every Circumstance had expressly declared and promis'd it in Scripture. The Coun-

<sup>35</sup> *Postquam enim à Judo is in cruce suspensus est, mox ut spiritum reddidit, unita suæ Divinitati anima ad inferum profunda descendit.* Aug. Sermon. 137. Tom. 10. col. 899.

<sup>36</sup> *Ex toto autem pars significatur, cum dicitur Christus sepultus, cum sola ejus caro sepulta sit.* Ibid. de Anima. L. 1. c. 17. Tom. 7. col. 1158.

*Si quis negaverit in Sacramento contineri verè realiter & substantialiter corpus & sanguinem una cum animâ & divinitate Domini nostri Jesu Christi, &c. Anathema sit. Con. Trid. Sess. 3. cap. 1.*

cil of *Trent* therefore to avoid this difficulty, 37 hath joyned the Soul of Christ together with his Body, to accompany his Divinity in the Sacrament: Infomuch that I have heard a Doctor of Laws of that Communion declare, that he believed that the Host after its Con-

secration was as rational, discursive, and visible as any Man. But on what Authority all this Confidence is founded, I profess I am in the dark as to its discovery. For take those words of Christ (*this is my Body*) in any sense that they can bear, and certainly nothing more than the Body of Christ can be expressed in them (besides their Mystical signification) and if you will limit this unto the notion of a Sacrifice, as I shewed you must, that will infer directly that his Soul must be excluded from it. And surely then whosoever he is that pretends to Miracles, to act not only beyond the Power and the very Conceptions of a Man, but even directly against all sense and reason; He ought to produce at least the Commission that God hath given him for to do such things, with such ample Clauses and Expressions in it as confer that Power beyond all exception; Otherwise Men cannot believe him that he is sent by God, but will undoubtedly reject him, and despise his Doctrin. The Consequence then is this, That even the most literal sense of Christ's words being granted, yet the Consecrated Host is not to be adored: But this constant practice of Worshipping it at Mass is a Crime not justifiable in any Christian, being directly contrary to the first Commandment in the Law, and our Saviours Confirmation of it in the Gospel; where he hath expressly commanded us in these unquestionable terms, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Mat. iv. 10.

§. 16. There is one thing more that is observable in this branch of your Devotion, which I think my self obliged to make Remarks on, and that is the general state of the Congregation when the Mass is Celebrated before them. For the Sacrament being daily Administred in the sight of all the People, there appears an eminent danger even in going to Mass, without such a Preparation for it as befits a Worthy Communicant: Since if you consider seriously the Feast which the King made at

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his Son's Wedding, as it is related in the Parable, *Mat. xxii. 2.* and is generally understood to represent the Blessed Sacrament wherein Christ is most especially united unto his Church: You will find that the Person who is there Condemned was guilty of no other Crime or Misdemeanour but in coming to the Marriage without a Wedding Garment. For it doth not appear that he so much as sat down among the Guests, or was any-wise a Partaker of the Wedding Feast: But his Indictment is for his presumption, in daring to come in without a proper dress, and for that alone he was Condemned to misery. In the Primitive Church therefore we find this mischief most cautiously prevented, and that <sup>38</sup> whenever the Celebration of the Sacrament began, one of the Deacons stood up and Exhorted all Persons that were unfit for to receive it, to retire. So that instead of the common notion that is received among the People, that in the Mass a Sacrifice is offered for all that are present at it: There is oftner a danger than an advantage in such an attendance, and instead of taking away, it rather adds unto their Sins: Since all Men know that the Sacrament cannot be beneficial but only unto those that worthily receive it, as its very Institution, Nature, and Promises do manifest: But it is very injurious unto all Spectators that are not duly qualified for to joyn in the Communion.

<sup>38</sup> *Nullus Catechumenus, nullus auditor, nullus infidelis, nullus hereticus, qui primam orationem perfecisti, discedite, pueros recipite matres, Constit.*  
Apost.

§. 17. I could easily run up this my Letter to a Volume with such like Observations upon other Particulars, wherein you now profess to differ in Opinion from me; As the Administration of the Sacrament in one Kind only, directly contrary to our Saviour's Institution, *Mat. xxvi. 27.* your Publick Prayers in an unknown tongue, against the express Doctrine of *St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiv. 28.* your Praying to Saints and Angels in opposition to God's Law, and the practice of his Servants, *Mat. iv. 10. Revel. xxii. 8.* and your Worshipping of Images against the express letter of the second Commandment. But these are I hope sufficient to my present Design, both to discover fully your disadvantage in your change, and to clear those mistakes which were the occasion of it: To shew you plainly how continually you stand exposed to danger in that Profession wherein you are; and that even your own Notions being granted as far as the words

words can bear, yet you are daily guilty of a most grievous sin, and this not altogether in a careless run of irregular practice, but in the Solemn Acts of your Publick Devotions; and for this mischief you have drawn upon you gnats, without any least prospect of an imaginary Benefit, there being no advantage which you can pretend to now, that you did not as fully and clearly enjoy before you were perswaded for to alter your Religion. I will not therefore press you with any further Arguments to return, to renew your first love, and to bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance; since I have reason to hope that you will never shut your eyes against the light, nor obstinately withstand your own Salvation. But when you seriously consider, and carefully weigh the Arguments that are offered to you, and have strictly examined the Principles of your Religion, and of Rational indifference, and a Christian diligence; that the Grace of God that hath influenc'd your former Practice, be now as effective in enlightning your Understandings, since it is no shame to err, but to persist in error; the seeking the product of infirmity, but the other of perfection. You will demonstrate your sincerity in what you have done, by embracing of the truth on the conviction of your Conscience. And that the God of truth may direct you in the right way to Heaven, and Happiness; and by the influence of his Holy Spirit, shew you clearly what is right, and what is true, and that that Orthodox Divine Faith in, which he requires of every Christian; This is the hearty and the constant Prayer of

*your most Obedient and Faithful*

*Friend and Servant in Christ*

*John, the 29th of*

*December, 1690*

*R. D.*

*to the*